WEST VIRGINIA SPLATTER

JANUARY 2025

AL HIX, W8AH

Shortly after I first began attending the WVDXA breakfasts on Tuesday mornings (Bob Evans Restaurant, Jefferson Road, South Charleston) I began hearing snippets of stories about Al Hix, W8AH. Most revolved around his being an Elmer to local hams. Many of those he mentored have become Elmers to me and numerous other "young" hams. During a recent breakfast the stories centered on his activities during World War II.

I asked those at the breakfast to write an article about W8AH. They informed me it had been done while Hal Turley, W8HC was putting out a newsletter for KARC in the 1990's. I asked Hal for a copy. He told me it was in the material he had given me and that more information about Al Hix was available on line.

*Due to the multitude of articles about Al Hix and the different periods in his life I consolidated the information from the various sources into one sketch which roughly follows the outline of: "*Gentleman DX'er - A Portrait of Al Hix, W8AH", by Doug Sweeny, N8JC and Mike Mrvosh, W8LZC p*ublished in the September 1994 KARC newsletter* "Chirp".

A Portrait of Al Hix, W8AH

A native of Charleston WV, Al attended Charleston High School, where he became interested in electronics and amateur radio. The first QSO for Al Hix, W8PQQ (his first call sign) was logged on November 9, 1935 at 10:58 AM, a 12-minute QSO with W8OIH. Yes, QSO start and end times were required as were ANY other time you keyed the transmitter. Al's first logbook includes many, many CQ entries without establishing a QSO. Al's very first logged contact was naturally a CW (A1) QSO on "approximate" 3750 KC. W8OIH was given a 337 RST and W8PQQ received a 449 report. In the comment column Al recorded, "FIRST QSO POMEROY OHIO". His senior year he served as President of CHS's amateur radio club. He graduated in 1936.

After graduation, Al worked for a couple of years before enrolling at West Virginia University (WVU) to pursue an Electrical Engineering degree. While at WVU Al enrolled in the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC). During his time at WVU Al operated the universities radio station, W8SPY.

In 1942 Al graduated with an Electrical Engineering degree and a commission as a Second Lieutenant in the US Army. He was assigned to the Army's Signal Corps Training Center at Fort Monmouth, NJ. Because of his ham experience and knowledge of electronics, Al quickly became an instructor. Al later

became the officer in charge of a radio team. After training in fixed signal station installation and operation, the team joined other radio teams at Camp Crowder, MO for advanced training in station installation, operation and maintenance.

Eventually Al, as part of the 999th Signal Company, boarded a transport ship bound for England and the European Theater. The 52 ship flotilla was attacked by German U-Boats while enroute to England. The flotilla dropped depth charges on the submarines in response. Only one ship in the flotilla was damaged. A couple of days after the U-Boat attack the flotilla arrived in England.

Al arrived in England just five months before the Allies invasion of Normandy (D-Day). Nine days after the invasion, Al's unit arrived in Normandy, where the Germans, only a few miles away, were fighting to allow their forces to retreat and regroup. As the Germans retreated, Al's unit set up vital communication facilities to aid the Allies pursuit of the retreating Germans all the way to Paris, France.

Upon arrival in Paris, Al's team set up a permanent communications establishment consisting of a 40 KW multi-channel Single-Side-Band (SSB) system, signal center with a tape relay center, power generators and several rhombic antennas located miles apart. The rhombic antennas were linked to VHF equipment installed in the Eifel Tower. This allowed communications between the European Theater and the Pentagon. Secrecy was maintained using voice scrambling and descrambling devices and a 12-channel multiplex RTTY transmitter.

War takes a toll on all kinds of equipment. During the Battle of the Bulge a team was established and sent to Liege, Belgium to repair and replace the quanities of damaged communications equipment. Al Hix was put in charge of the repair facility. This involved setting up a repair facility in an old building and repairing, rebuilding, and restoring equipment to “like new” condition. This seemingly safe post was not without danger. One radio brought to the facility by a civilian for repair was found to contain a German booby trap. It was safely exploded in a nearby field by Ordinance personel. Any effort to repair the unit would have cost the Allies many lives. During the final days of WW II, Captain Hix was assigned to Paris where he eventually separated from the US Army Signal Corps.

After the war, Al returned to the Kanawha Valley and took a job with Appalachian Power Company for a brief period. He later began a thirty-eight year career with Union Carbide. Al worked as a control systems design engineer for Carbide plants worldwide. He also designed radio systems and was a corporate consultant for communications systems. Al was involved with the Instrument Society of America (ISA) where he advanced from President of the local chapter to district Vice President and finally a Fellow of the ISA.

During 1947 and the next few years Al was in the thick of the Amateur Radio boom generated by the returning soldiers. Records indicate Al was a member of the Kanawha Valley Amateur Radio Association in 1947. Other documents link his call sign to Homer Hix, but no one calls him Homer. In 1956 Al Hix, W8PQQ is listed as a member of the Kanawha Radio Club. During this period Al obtained his Radio Telegraph Second Class and his First Class Telephone license. Al became Section Manager and State Army MARS Director and later ARRL Assistant Director.

During the Berlin Crisis in 1950 Al was recalled to Active Duty from his reserve unit and served for 17 months in Europe. This time Al's XYL, Connie, went with him. Al was a general staff officer for engineering and installation of a large communications complex in Orleans, France. This complex served as a back up for all locations in Europe to communicate with the Pentagon. This was deemed essential since the threat of Russia's invasion of Europe seemed a certainty.

While on active duty in Europe Al had many opportunities to set up Dxpeditions. Al operated as F7AR in Orleans. Later he and four other hams went to Andorra and operated the first amateur radio station in that Principality on the Iberian Peninsula using the call sign 7B4QF. Subsequently, Al operated the second amateur radio station in Monaco using the call sign 3A2AC. Still later Al returned to Andorra to operate as PX1AR.

Al and Connie Hix returned to the Kanawha Valley where Al resumed his career with Union Carbide. In 1960 Al passed his Extra Class Exam and obtained the call sign W8BT.

Al's Carbide career provided numerous opportunities for Dxpeditions. While in Belgium in 1967, Al operated as ON8VO. During this trip to Europe, Al also managed to travel to Luxembourg where he operated as W8BT/LX and ON8VO/LX. During an Carbide assignment in Puerto Rico, Al operated as AJ4BT.

In 1977 Al received the call sign W8AH which had been previously held by a fellow ham who Al had frequently spoken with on the air. After the original holder of this call sign became a silent key, Al wanted to honor his friends call sign and keep it active. Before making application to the FCC, Al contacted his friend's widow to ask permission to assume her husband's call sign. With her permision Al applied to the FCC and received the call sign W8AH which became one of the most acclaimed call signs in the world.

In 1980 and 1981 Al and Cal Basham, W8NR, flew to the French Island of St. Pierre, off the coast of Newfoundland for two Dxpeditions where they operated as FP0GBG. Al also belonged to Partners Of America. In 1991 this organization had Al visit Brazil to assist in upgrading that countries emergency radio systems. During this visit Al was granted the call PP1ZAH and operated using it to make xcontacts all over the world. This was the first time the Brazilian Goverment issued a call sign to a foreigner.

Al retired from the Army Reserve as a Lt. Colonel and served as President of the WV Chapter of the Retired Officers Assoociation for two years. Al served as President of the WV State Radio Council, President of the WV Quarter Century Wireless Association and President of the WV DX Association. Al was instrumental in establishing the Kanawha Valley Volunteer Examiners Program and was WV Amateur of the Year in 1986.

Al received over 200 operating awards over the years. He was NUMBER ONE worldwide in DXCC on 40 meters, having contacted 373 countries. He was also on the DXCC Honor Roll with 388 entities confirmed,

The last QSO logged by Al Hix, W8AH was a CW QSO at 0343 UTC on June 10, 2003. It was with UU8JG on 14 Mhz and both stations gave each other 599 reports. The only comment for this QSO by Al was, "Nick." I wonder how many

contacts he achieved in his 68 years as a ham.

According to Charlie Young, N8RR, who enjoyed having Al Hix as a mentor from the age of 14, “If there was a person who lived ham radio 24-7 it was Al Hix. From Al’s mountain top QTH overlooking Charleston, he was loud every where, on all bands, especially into Russia and deep Asia over the pole.”

Al's aggressiveness in DX pileups and the techniques he used were 180 degrees opposite from his demeanor in person. Charlie said “I would classify Al as downright meek and mild in person, very soft spoken and polite.” But, Al took no prisoners when working DX. He was relentless. No one could argue with the result. His many awards placed him at the top of the Honor Rolls. Al became a Silent Key on 25 June 2003 at the age of 85, after a short illness.

I never met Al Hix, W8AH. That's my loss. I have been fortunate enough to meet some of the hams he mentored and to have them share their knowledge with me. Judging by their respect for him, Al Hix was a gentleman, a skilled engineer, a knowlegable communictions technician and a radio operator with skills and tenacity beyond your average ham.

REPEATERS WANTED

The Appalachian Repeater Association (ARA) is looking for repeater owners to help them expand their coverage. They will consider any place in the state but are especially interested in the Milton/Huntington area and the Flatwoods, Cowen, and Webster Springs areas. They are interested in 10 meter, 6 meter, 2 meter or 440 repeaters.

If you are a repeater owner that wants to get out of repeater ownership or if you have tower space but need help getting a repeater up, or just want more information, contact Chris Hatcher, WV8CH on the ARA facebook page or their website or contact him directly at:

697 Country Club Drive
Beaver, WV 25813-9137

There is more than one way to raise your desk microphone.

WEST VIRGINIA AMATEUR RADIO CLUB NETS

Northern Panhandle Amateur Radio Club
Sunday at 7:00 PM
Digital net 441.825

Kanawha Amateur Radio Club Net
Sundays at 8:30 PM
145.350 PL 91.5

8 Rivers ARC Net (Pocahontas County)
Sundays at 9:00 PM
145.11 PL 107.2

8 Rivers Six Meter Net (Pocahontas County)
Thursday, 9:00 PM
53.33 MHZ Tone 156

Ritchie Amateur Group (RAG) Net
Thursday at 9:00 PM
147.300 MHz Tone 107.2

Black Diamond ARC Net (Raleigh County)
Friday, 9:00 PM
145.370 MHz PL 100.0

CWVWA Net
Thursday 9:00 PM
147.165 MHz Tone 91.5

Coal Country ARC Net (Boone County)
Tuesday 9:00 PM
147.195 MHz

Eastern Panhandle Traffic Net
(Jefferson, Morgan and Berkley Counties)
Daily 6:45 PM
147.255 MHz Tone 123

Mason County Amateur Radio Group
Monday 9:00 PM
442.400 MHz Tone 91.5

Pioneer Amateur Radio Association 2 M Net
Central West Virginia
Tuesday 7:00 PM
146.835 MHz

Plateau Amateur Radio Association 2 M Net
Thursday 8:00 PM
146.790 MHz

Buffalo 10 Meter Net
Thursday 8:00 PM at 28.405

WV Amateur Radio Club Information Net
Tuesday at 8:30 P.M.
147.270 – offset PL Tone 123.0
EchoLink Node 439354

Parkersburg Amateur Radio Klub (P.A.R.K.)
Tuesdays, 9:00 PM on all linked repeaters.
146.970 MHz -offset Tone 91.5
147.390 MHz +offset Tone 91.5
444.725 MHz + offset Tone 91.5

Country Roads Net
Thursday 8:00 P.M
WV-Link Room 46488
Local Node Connection:
WVAR UHF 441.825 (Scott Depot, WV)
WB8CQV VHF 147.21 MHz (S.Charleston)
Hot spots use US-WV-LINK (19941)

Pocahontas County Coffee Net
Monday-Wednesday-Friday 10:30 AM
146.730 – Tone 100.0
EchoLink WB8CNN-L

Mon County Amateur Radio Club Net
Wednesday at 8:00 PM
147.075 Tone 103.5
Linked to HAMTALK System

JARC (Jackson County)
Monday 8:00 PM
146.670 MHz Tone 107.2

Monongalia Wireless Association
Monday 9:00 PM
145.430 MHz Tone 103.5

Mountain State FM Net (Tucker County)
Saturday 9:00 PM 145.370 MHz

Potomac Highlands Amateur Radio Net (Hardy)
Monday 8:30 PM
145.190 MHz

Stonewall Jackson ARA 2 M Net
Tuesday 9:00 PM
147.210 MHz Tone 103.5

DMR Net by David Sexton AB8D
Tuesday at 7:30 PM W8MOP 444.45 DMR repeater
on the 3154 WV statewide talk group

WEST VIRGINIA ARES AND SKYWARN NETS

Kanawha ARES Net
Sundays at 8:00 PM
145.350 PL 91.5

Jefferson County ARES Net
Sunday at 8:30 PM
147.2WV Eastern Region ARES Net
Monday at 8:00 PM
147.255 MHz

Cabell County ARES Net
Monday at 8:30pm
On the following linked repeaters:
W8VA 146.76 MHz PL 131.8
N8OLC 146.985 MHz PL 131.8
KB8TGK 443.850 MHz PL 162.2 (Echolink)

Tri-Counties ARC ARES Net
Boone, Lincoln and Logan Counties
Tuesday at 7:30 PM
145.17 Tone 100.0

MARA weekly ARES WX net
Wednesdays, 9:00 P.M.
145.35 MHz PL 103.5

Marion County ARES Net
Wednesday 8:00 PM
145.350 MHz

*The West Virginia **ARES HF** Net*
First Thursday of each month
After WV Fone Net at 2200 UTC
3.805 MHz or 7.235 MHz

Mason County Amateur Radio Group ARES
Monday 9:00 PM
444.300 MHz Tone 91.5

Multi County ARES NET (HAMTALK System)
Tuesday 9:00 PM
146.685 MHz

Northern WV ARES/RACES Net
Wednesday 8:30 PM
145.300 MHz

TSARC Skywarn Net
Tuesday 7:15 PM
146.910 MHz

Blufield Skywarn Net Mercer County
Monday 7:30 PM (Except first Monday)
145.490 MHz

Raleigh County ARES Net
Monday 8:00
145.370 MHz Tone 100
EchoLink 145.370-R

Fayette County ARES Training and INFO Net
Second and Fourth Thursdays each
Month at 8:30 PM - 146.790 MHz

Tri-State Skywarn Net
Friday's at 8:00 PM
On WVAR's 147.27o Tone 123 linked to
Ashland' 's 146.94 repeater.

Ohio Valley ARES Net
Saturday 10:00 AM
441.825 Mhz

District 6 ARES Net (Mineral, Grant, Hardy, Morgan,Jefferson Berkeley and Hampshire)
Sunday 8:30 PM
147.390 MHz Tone 123

District 7 ARES Net (Raleigh County)
Tuesday 8:00 PM
145.370 MHz Tone 100

Gilmer County ARES/RACES Net
Monday 9:00 PM
145.290 MHz

Mercer County ARES Net
Third Thursday 7:30 PM
145.490 MHz

Ohio County ARES Net
Sunday 8:00 PM
146.760 MHz

Pendleton County ARES/RACES Net
Second and Fourth Thursday 8:30 PM
147.345 MHz

Wayne County ARES Net
Monday 9:00 PM
147.390 MHz

Statewide Auxiliary Communications Net

The West Virginia Division of Emergency Management will host the first HF net with the WV amateur radio community on **Saturday December 21st at 7pm.**

There are a few notes to cover before then:

- At 7pm, we will meet on **7.235MHz**. If 7.235MHz is unavailable, we will meet on **7.240** followed by **7.230** in that order. If they are unavailable or unusable, we will move to **3.810MHz** followed by **3.865MHz.**
- If band conditions are less than optimal, we will host our first net on Sunday December 22nd at 7pm,
- If active space weather conditions (i.e Solar Radiation Storm, Geomagnetic Storm), cause conditions to be degraded for a long period of time, the net may be postponed until conditions improve.
- All licensed amateur radio operators who are General, Advanced, and Extra class are encouraged to participate.

The Division will also host a 2 meter net on the Scott Depot Repeater on Saturday December 21st at 8pm. All licensed amateur radio operators are encouraged to participate!

- Repeater information - 147.270MHz with a PL tone 123.0
- Echolink node 439354. WV8AR-R

EMAIL ARTICLES, CORRECTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS TO WV SPLATTER TO ME at nettlescreek@frontier.com . TO ENSURE YOUR ARTICLE IS IN THE APPROPRIATE ISSUE SUBMIT IT BY THE MIDDLE OF THE PREVIOUS MONTH.

Winter Field Day (WFD)

Along with many other clubs in West Virginia, WVAR will participate in ARRL Field Day's colder cousin during the weekend of January 25-26, 2025 from the Lions Club facility in Liberty, WV. It's a great opportunity to flex your operating muscles in less than hospitable conditions. To learn more about WVAR's Winter Field Day activity contact Tommy Hodges, K8AAT at thodges.nais@gmail.com

Since the first Winter Field Day in January 2007, its purpose and core principles remain the same:

> *ham radio operators should practice portable emergency communications in winter environments as the weather conditions present unique operational concerns. WFD is formatted to increase your level of preparedness for disasters and improve your operational skills in subpar conditions.*

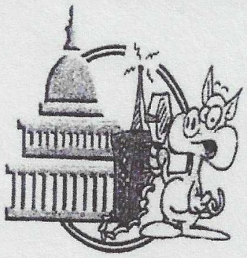
The 2025 event has some important changes:

•Event times have changed, and the event has been extended beyond 24 hours. The 30-hour operational period starts at 1600 UTC on Saturday (11 am EST) and ends at 21:59 UTC on Sunday (4:59 pm EST). Stations may begin setting up no earlier than 1600 UTC (11 am EST) on the Friday before. However, cumulative setup time shall not exceed 12 hours.

•Locations do not have to remain fixed during the entire event.

•Objectives (previously called bonuses) are now multipliers, and several objectives have been added. The objectives should be your main focus during the exercise. An Objective Multiplier (OM) has been assigned to each objective. To calculate your score, multiply your QSO points by your total OM.

To learn much more about the changes and objectives, visit the WFD website.



41st Annual

CHARLESTON AREA HAMFEST

Saturday, March 1, 2025
9 AM to 1 PM

BENI KEDEM TEMPLE
100 Quarrier Street
Charleston, WV 25301
Easy access off the interstates with
FREE PARKING BESIDE THE BUILDING!
(Handicap-accessible entrance left side)

Grand Prize: $500 Cash!
2nd Prize: Yaesu FTM-200D 2m/440/C4FM Digi/FM Xcvr
3rd Prize: $100 DX Engineering Gift Certificate

Plus Half-Hour Door Prize Drawings for Baofeng Dual Band Handhelds

Admission: $10 ("Extra" tickets $2 for more chances to win prizes)
Tables: $10
Limited Electric at no charge; first come-first serve (bring your own extension cord)

For table reservations, contact Fred Vickers WV8FV ***Reserve yours now—limited table space!***
wv8fv@arrl.net or 304-421-1707

Load in: Friday, Feb 28 from 2 to 4:30 PM
Saturday, March 1 from 7 to 8:30 AM
(bring your own cart for load-in)

Forums: ARRL 10 AM; ARES 11 AM
ARRL VE Testing at 12 Noon

For More Info: qsl.net/w8gk or E mail n8tmw@arrl.net

2025 CQ DX HALL OF FAME

by INDEXA

by Bob Schenck, N2OO
Vice President INDEXA
Member CQ DX Hall of Fame
former DX Editor *CQ Magazine*

When Dick Ross K2MGA (Publisher of CQ Communications, INC) became a "Silent Key", in April 2024, many wondered about the numerous award programs that were run by *CQ Magazine*. One very important program was the CQ DX Hall of Fame.

Prior to his passing, Dick gave his blessing for the International DX Association (INDEXA) to carry on with this prestigious award, with my guidance, if the magazine ever ceased functioning. As such, I am pleased to announce that INDEXA will begin the stewardship of the Heritage CQ DX Hall of Fame starting with the 2025 inductees.

Established in 1967, the CQ DX Hall of Fame honors those amateurs who have made exemplary contributions to DXing and DXpeditioning; including both on-air and off-air activities and accomplishments.

The activities and accomplishments that qualify one for membership in this elite group called the CQ DX Hall of Fame involves considerable personal sacrifice and can usually be described by the phrase "above and beyond the call of duty."

It is not enough to just be a DXpedition team member a number of times. To be in the DX Hall of Fame you might need to have the foresight to organize DXpeditions to the very hard to reach entities around the globe or perhaps work on ways to open Amateur Radio in the countries where politics exclude it. Other accomplishments could also be to create or provide new and/or important techniques that support the DX chaser. Other important attributes to be considered include "integrity", "perseverance", "good will", "honesty" and "being noncontroversial".

Nominations will be open January 1, 2025 through March 1, 2025. Please send to Bob Schenck, N2OO (n2oo@comcast.net) . Make sure to put "CQ DX HALL OF FAME" in the subject line.

Inductees will be announced at the SWODXA - Dayton DX Dinner.

Bob Schenck, N2OO
Chairman INDEXA CQ DX Hall of Fame Committee

Join CoCoRaHS

The **Co**mmunity **Co**llaborative **Ra**in, **H**ail, and **S**now Network

What is CoCoRaHS? It's a community based network of volunteers of all ages and background, working together to measure precipitation in their local communities.

CoCoRaHS Observers:

- **Are interested in weather**
- **Want to help meteorologists, hydrologists, and emergency managers**
- **Contribute to the Drought Monitor and disaster declarations**
- **Take measurements of rain, hail, and snow at your location**
- **Record observations online**

IT ONLY TAKES 4 EASY STEPS TO PARTICIPATE!

- ➔ **Register at CoCoRaHS.org**
- ➔ **View Online Training**
- ➔ **Obtain Approved Rain Gauge**
- ➔ **Record and Report Observations**

For more information or to sign up, visit https://cocorahs.org